HOUSE-KEEPING IN HAWAII

By KATHERINE POPE

NATSU COMING FROM THE GARDEN WITH A SPRAY OF GINGER FLOWERS

THE MADE MOST DELICIOUS COOLING BEVERAGES

OUR HOUSE

NATSU

NARIMATSU OF AN EVENING

THE newcomer in Hawaii finds much of novel interest, and the drawbacks are not insupportable. The oriental servants, with their politeness, their love of flowers, their look of daintiness and gentleness, and their quiet movements, are a joy to have about. Of course the folk that have always lived in Hawaii may smile at my statements, because of their own remembrances, memories of grim and long-drawn-out familiarities with other qualities possessed by these superficially praised folk of the East; and what I present here is avowedly given as merely impressionistic, not the fruit of extended experience.

The names of a number of gracious servers I have known in Hawaii come readily to mind, of man and maid who have ably and cheerfully assisted—sometimes guided—me in housekeeping and hospitality. That of Natsu should perhaps lead the list, Natsu, the daintiest, deftest, quietest-moving little Nipponese that ever graced a household. Always tidy in appearance—looking fresh as a flower—Natsu brewed and baked, swept and dusted, made beds, waited at table, answered door and telephone bell, "earned her board and keep" and wage without doubt.

On those rare lazy mornings when I breakfasted in bed, the indulgence was made doubly pleasurable by the grace of the handmaid that brought me the breakfast; almost I was tempted to be lazy every morning. A little spook in pale gray would glide into my room, smilingly, ceremoniously bid me good morning, in cordial tones inquire "Breakfast this time?" softly disappear, shortly reappear. And this was the breakfast she served: First—placed on a spotless cloth whereon lay a single yellow blossom—half of a papaya (fruit of the so-called lemon tree), a section of lemon, a glass of water. Then cereal and cream. The last tray held a pot of coffee, in a fringed napkin two high, hot popovers, a pat of butter, and an egg. Excellent breakfast.

Natsu in the garden was a study worth while, and every morning Natsu would go out to get a fresh spray of ginger flowers for the room of the member of the household who was particularly fond of the lemon-like fragrance and transparent beauty of this blossom. Natsu never was too hurried, never too indifferent, to take into consideration individual tastes and prejudices, and if anyone loved flowers then there was a special bond of attachment. She herself generally wore a blossom in her hair, be it blue Monday or holiday Sunday.

Turning from maid to man, the name of Ito is referred to gratefully. No matter the number of guests, the suddenness thereof, Ito would smile, bow, answer, "All right," and almost always everything would turn out all right. Such simple, sensible little luncheons as he daily set forth, everything cold that should be cold, everything hot that should be hot. I know nothing more deadly dull in the middle of the day, tropics or temperate zone, than a heavy indigestible meal, and concerning this Ito had the same prejudice as myself. When there were guests from the outside world, he was as keen as I in the effort to give a local flavor to the repast. Perhaps I can recall a menu or two and the decorations accompanying: In the center of the table, arranged in a low, spreading way, was a gray-green jar filled with double yellow coreopsis. The first course was a fruit cocktail compounded of papaya, orange and pineapple; for the second course there were served mullet, potato chips, brown bread-and-cucumber sandwiches; next, roast duck, guava jelly, mashed potatoes, green beans; then alligator pear (avocado) and water crackers; at the end, coffee and mints.

Another name is Tokomoto. He made most delicious cooling beverages, and I generally picture him as accompanied by a glass-filled tray. One drink that he bore about was especially popular, a cup that while tasty and sparkling was as innocent as it was good: "Mint, you cut him fine, you put sugar, you put lemons, squeeze him, stop in ice box long time. You put ginger ale, then pour him quick." Sherbets, too, he excelled in, offering of these a variety, sometimes blending flavors, sometimes giving a single fruit its full value. But above the value of his beverages and ices was his unvarying politeness, his smiling, kindly service.

I think of that dependable sweeper of walks, beater of rugs and veranda-washer, Nakama. Of the industrious gardener whose name we never could remember, but whom we referred to as the "smiling Jap." And even of pretending-to-be-cross old Yuji, who affirmed he hated flowers but was perpetually watering or weeding them. And most kindly I think of Narimatsu, caretaker at the mountain house loaned us one season. He was general utility man; hewer of wood and drawer of water, guide, mail-carrier, butler, gardener, raconteur. Evenings after his hot bath and the donning of Japanese attire—daytimes he wore American costume—he presented a remarkably well-groomed appearance, looked and acted the gentleman of leisure—a marked contrast to the "hired man" of the States.

Narimatsu's wife had but recently come out from Japan, and while anything but experienced in American methods of housekeeping, was so willing and intelligent that we could be nothing else than patient with her. Our garments suffered in her early attempts as laundress, but she improved week by week, and we found her on the whole worth training; though the training had to be from the ground up. Only one of our array of domestics was a complete failure. She was impossibly untidy, and our place would have become a veritable sty had we not personally hoed out every once in awhile.

And confession will have to be made. This eulogy of oriental servants will have to be tempered by the statement that never once could we relax in our housekeepings the role of rigid inspector; that though the Japanese are the nation that bathes, still they often are very benighted in other sanitary matters; the surroundings of the bathed ones all too often are squalid in the extreme.

Ah Oi, a young Chinese servant, we found a great scrubber and cleaner as well as a fair cook and an attentive waiter. He was very unpretty to look at, with his enormous mouth and protruding jaws, but he was so immaculate one presently forgot he was ill-looking. Never was our kitchen more inviting, our pantry more glittering, our silver shinier, than in the reign of this China boy. But ambition and school drew him away from pots and pans, and he apologetically bade us farewell. Another Chinaman, Joe, was almost as neat and a far better cook; the few months he was loaned to us we were served such tempting meals that mealtime became of disproportionate importance, everything else threatened to retire far into the background. Fortunately, the mistress by whom he had been employed for many years returned ere long, and removed the tempter from our midst.

One reason that folk in Hawaii have been able to keep servants a long time at a stretch is because the worst feature of domestic service does not obtain here; the lack of social life. In Hawaii the servants as a rule do not dwell in the employer's house, they either have little cottages a distance off in the grounds, or lodge outside. This gives them desirable independence and opportunity for social life of their own. It has its drawbacks, too. Sometimes the outside lodgings are dubious; but the disadvantages are unquestioned, and the worst feature of what Jane Addams stamps as a "belated industry" is done away with.

One hears not infrequently in Hawaii of a servant staying with the same family 17 years, 20 years, 25 years, and not a few have given such long service they have arrived at retirement on a pension. A man sometimes starts as cook, and rises to a sort of stewardship. Though of late the vexed servant problem has raised its head in the islands, and conversations here, as so many elsewhere, are weighed with grievances concerning household help.

And without doubt housekeeping in this tropic land has its share of anxieties and vexations. One who has only played at it as I have, really shows much temerity in pretending to present it, even superficially; if my experience had been longer, undoubtedly I should have dwelt on constantly changing servants, or the difficulty of giving orders in pidgin English, and of understanding pidgin English utterances, on high rents and high wages, on the way things will not "keep" in the tropics, on household pests—ants, cockroaches, silver moths, mice, giant rats, etc.—on the mountain of laundry that piles up every week, on—. But what's the use? Every housewife of every clime has complaints among, each knoweth her own trials. Perhaps, for a change, a syllable of praise of housekeeping experiences may be welcome.

DEPTH OF A SEED BED

Prairie Soil Was Plowed to a Six-Inch Depth and Disked.

Small Grain Harrowed Until Six Inches High and Corn Treated With Same Implement as Long as Possible—Prevent Evaporation.

Three years ago I took charge of a dry farm. The soil was a good loam containing a great many bowlders left by a glacial drift. At one time wheat in this section gave large yields but during the dry seasons the crop fell down to six to twelve bushels the acre which was scarcely worth fussing with at harvest time and stock was turned into many of the fields. I began the work of tackling virgin prairie. The neighbors thought I was crazy because I plowed the prairie soil six inches deep and followed the plow with a disk several times; because I harrowed the small grain until it was six inches high; because I harrowed the corn every week so long as possible and then plowed it each week with a very small tooth cultivator. But they were surprised at harvest time because some of that land gave a return of $32 the acre, writes Clifford Willis in Denver Field and Farm.

Last year many of the fields in the vicinity were prepared and plowed better than they have been for some time because the farmers saw more bushels as the result and bushels meant dollars. I also had to work on some heavy soil. A part of this land was turned six inches deep while some was plowed only four inches. In each case the disk followed the plow and would have been still better if I had cross-disked before sowing as I am now doing. Everything possible was done to make a good firm seed bed and also to prevent evaporation. Many people in the vicinity thought it strange that we would harrow our small grain when it was six inches high.

While working in the field stirring the soil, although dry, many of my brother farmers were not even in the field. We have harvested more and better grain than many of our neighbors simply because we kept at work. On the six-inch breaking of adobe the corn gave a yield of thirty-eight bushels the acre while four-inch breaking gave a yield of less than thirteen bushels. In cultivating our crops in the dry area we followed these three factors—a deep seed bed, a firm seed bed and surface cultivation. In every instance we disked our ground just as soon as possible after harvest and on the corn ground we disked the stalks in order to cut them up and also to make a mulch.

CONSERVE MOISTURE IN SOIL

Dry Farms Should Be So Worked That Large Quantity of Water Is in Soil at Harvesting Time.

It is always dangerous to permit the soil of a dry farm to become very dry, especially below the first foot. Dry farms should be so manipulated that even at the harvesting season a comparatively large quantity of water remains in the soil to a depth of eight feet or more. The larger the quantity of water in the soil in the fall, the more readily and quickly will the water that falls on the land during the resting period of fall, winter and early spring sink into the soil and move away from the top-soil. The top or first foot will always contain the largest percentage of water, because it is the chief receptacle of the water that falls as rain or snow, but when the subsoil is properly moist, the water will more completely leave the top-soil. Further, crops planted on a soil saturated with water to a depth of eight feet are almost certain to mature and yield well.

GENERAL FARM NOTES

Mixing plenty of litter with manure when storing hastens decomposition.

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Seasons of excessive wet or drought make "brain farming" of more value than ordinary seasons.

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It is a great handicap, and may be an actual injury, to load a light horse with great heavy shoes.

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Common baking soda is a great relief to fowls suffering from loose bowels. Put a teaspoonful to a half gallon of drinking water daily.

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The health of the dairy herd and the quality of their output depend to a large extent on the comfort and cleanliness of their quarters.

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The turkey crop hatched previous to June 1 should attain good growth by the last of November, the cock birds reaching ten to twelve pounds.

Marked Down.

Charles broke the spell as in a dejected tone of voice he said:

"Miss Fraser, I love you, but dare not dream of calling you mine. Yesterday I was worth $25,000, but today, by the turn of fortune's wheel, I have but a few paltry hundreds to call my own. I would not ask you to accept me in my reduced state. Farewell forever."

As Charles was about to stride mournfully away she caught him and eagerly cried:

"Good gracious! Reduced from $25,000 to $100. What a bargain! Of course I'll take you! You might have known I couldn't resist."—Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph.

From the Battlefield.

During the recent fighting along the banks of the Aisne a man was badly wounded. The ambulance corps tenderly placed him on a stretcher.

"Take him to the hospital," said the man in charge.

Slowly the wounded man opened his eyes and whispered faintly:

"What's the matter with the canteen?"—London Tit-Bits.

The Essential Thing.

"What must I do, doctor, to attain a ripe old age?"

"Live."—Boston Evening Transcript.

Love as It Is.

"I'll be true as steel," he protested.

"Common or preferred?" she queried.—Philadelphia Ledger.